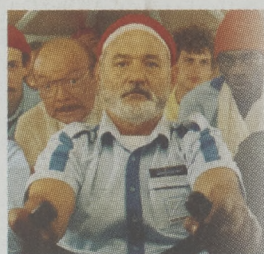


**OPINION PG. 2**  
**WAL-MART**  
**ALWAYS LOW WAGES**  
IS THE RETAIL GIANT GOOD  
FOR COMMUNITIES?



**VALLEY LIFE PG. 4**  
**MOVIE GIFT IDEAS**  
AVOID THE MAINSTREAM:  
GIVE UNIQUE PRESENTS.



**SPORTS PG. 4**  
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LADY MONARCHS  
ELIMINATED IN SECOND  
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**GALLERY PG. 6**  
**STAFF FAVORITES**  
PHOTOGRAPHERS' BEST  
SHOTS FROM AROUND  
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# VALLEY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

VOLUME 64, ISSUE NO. 10

DECEMBER 14, 2005

IT'S YOUR NEWSPAPER

## Sixth Crash Prompts New Safety Measures

■ Orange Line precautions leave little alternative for students.

BY JESUS ESQUIVEL  
STAFF WRITER

The Orange Line has suffered six accidents and caused almost two-dozen injuries in its first seven weeks of operation.

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority has slowed the intersection crossing speed to 10 mph, added strobe lights on the buses, put up extra signal lights and even taken some down. And accidents are still common.

Six people were injured Wednesday Dec. 7 after a sports utility vehicle ran a red light and crashed into the side of an Orange Line bus in Van Nuys.

The crash occurred around 11 a. m. in the 6300 block of Balboa Boulevard and caused two passengers and the bus operator to be taken to the hospital for minor injuries.

The collision was the sixth involving the 7-week-old busway which runs from Woodland Hills to North Hollywood crossing 36 intersections.

"I ride the Orange Line because I have to," said 20-year-



MARIA LOW / VALLEY STAR

**SECRET SANTA** - Four-year-old Richard Escobar was among the 72 kids who gave Santa Claus their wish lists Friday at the Valley College Child Development Center's holiday party. But look a little closer, that's not Saint Nick, that's Kinko's founder and Valley Alumni Paul Orfalea, whose foundation, the Orfalea Family Foundation, spreads cheer to the kids at the center during the holidays every year.

old Valley student Arturo Felix. "The 156 bus route would take me from Van Nuys to the North Hollywood station faster, but I have to take the Orange Line there because the 156 doesn't run the same route anymore."

The commute is slower because the buses have to slow down to 10 mph at each intersection crossing, a precaution taken after a Dec. 2 crash that left 14 passengers injured and prompted community activist John Walsh to call for the MTA to temporarily

shut down the Orange Line and conduct a safety review.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the chair of the MTA's Board of Directors, was skeptical that the 72-hour safety audit proposed by United Riders of Los Angeles would improve conditions.

According to the MTA, all six accidents have been caused by motorists making illegal turns or running red lights.

"People run red lights all over town, unfortunately, every day," said member of the MTA

board of directors and Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. "If somebody runs a red light, it's their fault. It's not the MTA's fault. It's not the Orange Line's fault. It's not the bus driver's fault."

But it wasn't until last week's crash that the MTA asked the city for help installing cameras at 12 busway crossings.

The MTA also plans to install see 'Crash' page 5

## TRiO Looks For Student Advancement

■ TRiO/SSS is looking for students interested in academic success.

BY EDUARDO MORÁN  
STAFF WRITER

Low income, first generation college students still have time to take advantage of TRiO, a student support services program at Valley College helping students reach their goals by providing free services.

With a goal of increasing retention and transfer rates for students, the program provides services such as tutoring, mentoring, one-on-one academic and career counseling and transferring. Financial aid and study workshops are also available through this U.S. Department of Education-funded program, along with a computer lab and a short-term laptop loan program.

"Students who enroll in the program will have an advantage over other students because of all the services we offer," said TRiO/SSS director Barbara Schneider. "We're excited about this program that is geared to help students be successful at Valley and transfer to four-year colleges."

To be eligible, a student must be a U.S. citizen or perma-

nent resident, and satisfy one or more of the following requirements: Have a documented disability, be a first generation college student (neither parent has a bachelor's degree from a U.S. university) have low income according to federal guidelines, a need for academic and personal preparation such as English 28 or below, Math 125 or below, a G.P.A. of 2.49 or lower and have fewer than 30 completed units.

To apply, students must complete an application, take an assessment test, provide recent income tax documents, have documentation of disability if applicable and schedule an appointment with the Barbara Schneider, who will determine eligibility.

Once accepted, students will be required to sign a contract agreeing to meet with a TRiO/SSS counselor each semester, who will see that students enroll in nine approved units and maintain a G.P.A. of 2.0 or higher. Students must also attend at least two workshops, club meetings, cultural events or field trips each semester and may stay in the program until they transfer to a four-year institution.

see 'TRiO' page 5

### CAMPUS CRIME

## Young Guns

BY EDUARDO MORÁN  
STAFF WRITER

### Vandalism

A Valley College employee had her vehicle's front driver-side tire damaged on Monday, Dec. 5, costing her \$165 in repairs. She parked on College Road South at 7:45 a.m. and went to work, she returned later in the day to find her tire was flat. The victim called a tire changing service and the tire was taken to a nearby tire shop where professionals determined that a person caused the damage. Campus police did not search the area for suspects or witnesses because the victim reported the incident a day later.

Two vandals caused \$300 in damage when they shot a window on campus with a BB gun earlier this month. A student observed the two unknown suspects on Thursday, Dec. 1 but reported the incident a week later to campus officials. Campus police have no suspects or witnesses and did not search the area because of the late report.

**The Valley College Sheriff's Department asks that anyone with information regarding any of these incidents please call the department at (818) 947-2911.**

## Scotland Comes to Life at Valley

BY MARC HOWARD  
STAFF WRITER

All the way out in the parking lot Saturday night, you could hear the Scottish bagpiper's bellowing song, sort of a sonic beacon inviting you toward the Mainstage Theater, where the Valley Symphony Orchestra would perform, accompanied by Los Angeles Philharmonic first violinist Rochelle Abramson.

Inside the theater, nearly every seat was filled. The audience chatted and looked through programs, slightly restless. The 55-piece orchestra was already on stage, their instruments quietly chatting in anticipation of the show.

The lights went down and the audience applauded as artistic director and conductor of the Valley Symphony Orchestra, Robert Chauls stepped on the stage to introduce "Ode to Scotland."

The orchestra played flawlessly during the nearly two-hour performance. Among the night's selections were "Scotch Poem" by Edward MacDowell, Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3 in A and "The Hebrides Overture."

The Hebrides was particularly moving. It is an epic piece conceived, as Chauls explained, after Mendelssohn's first boat ride to Scotland during which he was inspired by the landscape and weather.



MEL SELDAÑA / VALLEY STAR

**BROGUE'S GALLERY** - Dr. Robert Chauls conducts the Valley Symphony Orchestra for an evening of music inspired by Scotland.

The romantic piece conjured images of an epic journey. It was filled with triumphant highs and soft, somber Lulls. Chauls' precise direction seemed to lead the way to a common destination.

The highlight of the night came when the orchestra was joined by Abramson. She took the lead in the performance of Max Bruch's "Scottish Fantasy." She stood at the front of the stage rocking and swaying as the fingers of her right hand danced about the

neck of the violin. Her performance matched the intensity, complexity and nuance of the rest of the orchestra; the passages in Bruch's Fantasy stirred a range of emotions as would a good novel.

The audience showed their appreciation for Abramson with an ovation and a few of her fans handed her bouquets of roses before she exited the stage. At the end of the show the orchestra also received a well-deserved ovation for an excellent performance.

**One-Stop Registration**  
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## FINALS SCHEDULE

Monday, Dec. 19				
Date of Final				
Time of Final	6:30 - 8:30 a.m.	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.	12:30 - 2:30 p.m.	
Class Schedule	6:30 - 7:55 MW	9:40 - 10:50 MTWTh	1:00 - 2:10 MTWTh	1:00 - 2:25 MW
	6:45 - 7:55 MTWTh	9:40 - 11:05 MW	1:00 - 2:15 MWF	9:40 - 10:55 MWF
Tuesday, Dec. 20				
Date of Final				
Time of Final	6:30 - 8:30 a.m.	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.	12:30 - 2:30 p.m.	
Class Schedule	6:30 - 7:55 TTh	9:40 - 11:05 TTh	1:00 - 2:25 TTh	1:00 - 2:15 TThF
		9:40 - 10:55 TThF		
Wednesday, Dec. 21				
Date of Final				
Time of Exam	8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	10:30 - 12:30 p.m.	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	
Class Schedule	8:15 - 9:25 MTWTh	11:20 - 12:30 MTWTh	2:20 - 3:30 MTWTh	
	8:00 - 9:25 MW	11:20 - 12:45 MW	2:40 - 4:05 MW	
	8:00 - 9:15 MWF	11:20 - 12:35 MWF		
Thursday, Dec. 22				
Date of Final				
Time of Exam	8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	10:30 - 12:30 p.m.	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	
Class Schedule	8:00 - 9:25 TTh	11:20 - 12:45 TTh	1:45 - 3:10 TTh	
	8:00 - 9:15 TThF	11:20 - 12:35 TThF	1:45 - 3:00 TThF	

**All evening classes (3:30 p.m. or later) will have their final exam as follows:**

**Monday Class: December 19**  
**Tuesday Class: December 20**  
**Wednesday Class: December 21**  
**Thursday Class: December 22**  
**Friday Class: December 23**



## Plastic Affection

■ Gifts that say "Don't bother me."

BY BRIAN DEAN  
STAFF WRITER

Gift cards are quickly becoming more popular and convenient, available everywhere from drug stores to fast-food restaurants. Where once actual products were advertised as the popular gift for the year, gift cards are now hyped as the best item to give and receive. Though seen as simple solutions to the worry over what to give people who are hard to shop for, these cards also epitomize thoughtlessness and the impersonal nature of gift-giving.

The National Retail Federation says that 75.5 percent of consumers plan on purchasing at least one gift card this year. That's good news for retailers, since shoppers often spend more than the face value of the card when they use it. Half of gift card recipients said they had unredeemed cards from last year, according to the 2005 Deloitte Consumer Holiday Survey.

With this many people looking for a gift that takes mere minutes to select and purchase, shouldn't the shopping-days-'til-Christmas countdown be pushed back a few weeks?

The gift-giving season (ideally lasts all year), encompassing Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa, should be a time to honor people whose good deeds, friendship and loyalty you have enjoyed all year; to be unselfish by giving and to be gracious in receiving. But many people feel under pressure to give, turning shopping into a dreaded chore.

You find yourself saying things like "I hate buying gifts for her," or "He'd better like what I got for him, or else!" Shopping for so-and-so is such a pain, so why try?

Thus, the gift card. It shows that you care just enough to grab something on the way to the cash register, arms full of real gifts for other people.

And it's just like giving cash. For the most part, the recipient is limited to one location - a subtle encouragement to buy something from a general category such as clothes, books or Jack in the Box. However, Visa boasts a gift card that can be used anywhere Visa is accepted. And since Visa is "everywhere you want to be," how can its gift card be considered any different than cash?

Maybe shoppers don't realize what negative messages can be conveyed by sending certain gift cards. Some employers give their workers gift cards to grocery stores as a holiday bonus. Are wages so pitiful that a reward constitutes access to basic necessities? And a gift card to a restaurant simply screams "Here, have a nice dinner, but not with me."

Putting a little thought into gift-giving is not that difficult. If you can't imagine what someone would like, get something you would like them to have. It truly is the thought that counts. And if the recipients have the nerve to complain about the gifts, given all the options available for returns and exchanges, perhaps they aren't worth your effort.

This year, resist the urge to take the easy way out. Give from the heart, and reasonable people will take notice and appreciate it more. Gifts with personality are always remembered.

## ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

A LOOK AT AN ISSUE FROM BOTH SIDES. THIS WEEK: IS WAL-MART GOOD FOR AMERICA?

### The Bottom Line Is the Bottom Line

BY MARC HOWARD  
STAFF WRITER

As the economic behemoth known as Wal-Mart continues to expand, it swallows whole smaller retailers, leaving thousands of Americans jobless. By pressuring its suppliers to cut wholesale prices, the company has contributed to the migration of U.S. manufacturing jobs overseas. These things are unfortunate. But that, as they say, is just how it goes.

In this era of globalization, companies like Wal-Mart are able to go to any part of the world in order to get the cheapest goods they can for their customers. They're able to buy cheaper wholesale goods in China, Mexico or Bangladesh and would be remiss not to do so.

It just happens that the Wal-Mart Corporation is the most efficient at it. But even as Wal-Mart wipes out competition and eliminates jobs, keep in mind that it also creates jobs. Someone has to work at the Wal-Mart Supercenters as they continue to crop up all over the world. The company employs 1.3 million people in the U.S. alone.

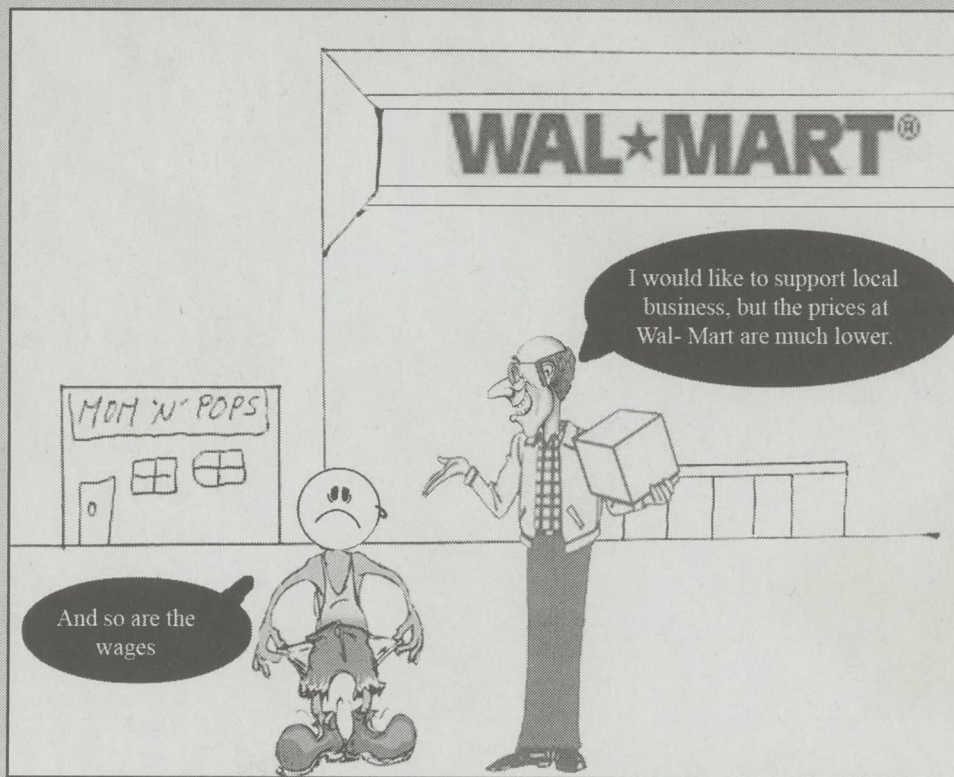
Wal-Mart is now the world's largest corporation and was the first retail outlet ever to top the Fortune 500.

*The bottom line is that a corporation's main concern is the bottom line; how to increase profits and keep customers coming through the door. As harsh as this may seem, it is the American way.*

The company is currently raking in more than \$200 billion in sales annually and its success can be attributed to a single factor: It offers consumers what they want. And what consumers want are quality goods at cheap prices.

Wal-Mart cannot be faulted for the efficiency with which it provides for its customers, and its customers can't be faulted for taking advantage of the deals.

Another effect that Wal-Mart's low prices and wages seem to have on the economy is that they drive down overall retail wages in many communities. The planned opening of dozens of superstores in California and the anticipated effect on local wages was a central factor in the late 2003 labor dispute between our three major supermarket chains: Ralph's,



WAL-MART - Rolling back wages.

Vons and Albertson's and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

It is no company's business to see to it that wages are kept high. On the contrary, any manager or executive at any company would be negligent if he or she wasn't paying its employees as low a wage as possible.

The bottom line is that a corporation's main concern is the bottom line; how to increase profits and keep customers coming through the door.

As harsh as this may seem, it is the American way.

Wal-Mart is a model for free-market economy success. Obviously, there has to be some fallout in the wake of the competition, which Wal-Mart is currently winning. But what can you do? That's what America is about, right? Competition.

### The Cost of Wal-Mart: Priceless

BY LYNDSEY PHILLIPS  
STAFF WRITER

I grew up in a town that has revolved around the Wal-Mart Supercenter since it was built in 1995. Most of my friends worked there at some point, and my mom, who has extensive banking experience, still works in the tiny 'cash office' with a

the Statistical Analysis of Gender Patterns in Wal-Mart's Workforce study conducted by Dr. Richard Drogin in 2003.

This creates families who can barely afford rent, food, clothing, education, etc. and are unable to stimulate other aspects of the economy, thus resulting in lower revenue across the board.

These families do not earn enough money to participate in local events like arts, entertainment and other stimulating activities. They cannot purchase homes or new cars or send their children to college. More money is spent by taxpayers to compensate free school lunches and government assistance like welfare and Medicaid not because the people are lazy or taking advantage of "the system," but because their employer pays unlivable wages.

This probably works out well for Wal-Mart though, because employees can take advantage of "rollbacks" before leaving work. Since they can't afford to shop elsewhere, much of their spending is done at the discount store that keeps them in this state of poverty.

I'd be interested to find out just what percent of employees' wages get cycled back through Wal-Mart simply due to the convenience of already being in the only store they can afford to shop in. Those figures, however, do not seem to exist.

But that's okay. Available figures speak for themselves.

Only 48 percent of employees are covered by the company's medical plan. The most affordable plan includes a \$1,000 deductible per person before being provided with reimbursement. This is about 9 percent of annual earnings for single coverage and 27 percent of annual earnings for a person enrolled with family coverage.

No wonder my dad uses insurance from his non-Wal-Mart employer.

The company has admitted to "encouraging" employees to take advantage of Public Health Care Assistance (welfare and Medicaid) because they deem it to be a "better value," according to Wal-Mart President and CEO Lee Scott.

Is this the America you envision living in? Shouldn't we, as a society, encourage employers to provide better options for their employees, keeping them off public assistance—isn't that the point of having a job in the first place?

Wal-Mart is not good for America, a country founded on the ideals of equality and the attempt to create a better life. This is not the American Dream. This is a nightmare.

## Campus View

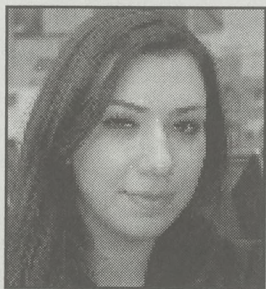
PHOTOS BY MELANIE SALDAÑA

Where Will You Do Your Holiday Shopping?



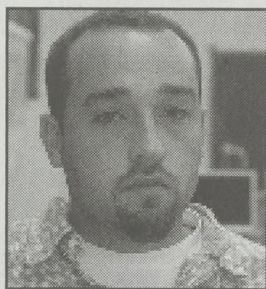
"I'm shopping online. Lots of people are using online sources for gifts. It's easier and a great alternative to crowds."

Kevin Myerson  
Broadcasting



"Barney's! My favorite store. I just spent a fortune on my bag and now I'm broke for Christmas. But, I always find money for gifts for friends."

Ilit Miskevich  
Business Administration



"Robinson's-May or mall stores and little shops. I never go to stores like Wal-Mart. I try to stay clear of them because of the controversy about how they run their business. I'm uncomfortable with the monopoly that eliminates small mom-and-pop businesses."

Nick Stein  
Cinema Arts



"I will go to Target; it's the place to go. They have everything and it's good quality. It's not as crowded as Wal-Mart. There is room to breathe."

Eylene Perez  
Astrophysics

## LETTERS

THE VALLEY STAR tries to print as many letters from its readers as possible. Letters should not exceed 300 words or they may be edited for space and must include the author's full name, major or connection to Valley College and contact information.

For more stories, photos and letters to the editor, visit the Valley Star online at

www.lavalleystar.com

## Fighting for the Right to Medicate

■ Regarding "Medicinal marijuana causes more harm than good" by Kristen Becker.

It's hard to pick which erroneous statement to address first.

Aside from vaporizing being the preferred pulmonary route, smoking cannabis has recently been shown not only a lack of resultant cancers but it actually exhibits anti-cancer properties - even when smoked.

It is strange that a society that allows the sale of demonstrably carcinogenic tobacco would issue a stern look at adults who choose the non-toxic alternative.

Given that FDA has approved THC as marinol and that the natural herb has never caused an overdose fatality, the

prohibition of medicinal cannabis is absurd as well as atrocious.

Arrest, incarceration and a criminal record are clearly harmful to one's health. "Only 66 cannabinoids have medical value." Gee, what a worthless herb.

Marijuana is almost as addictive as coffee.

Given a choice between "substance abuse treatment" and prosecution or job loss, you do the math.

After smoking pot regularly since mid-1968, the profound relief from constant low-grade terror of being eligible for arrest almost made me grateful for my glaucoma diagnosis four years ago.

Cannabis prohibition has perpetrated many crimes against humanity - from forbidding American production of its

strong and versatile fiber, and extraordinarily nutritional seed and oil; from medical ignorance and leading to unnecessary loss of vision by my fellow glaucoma patients, to the chemo patients who die vomiting like Peter McWilliams.

*Marijuana is almost as addictive as coffee.*

Perhaps the worst atrocity of all: millions of otherwise law-abiding Americans deliberately incapacitated in prisons and living artificially handicapped with criminal records for victimless, consensual adult cannabis "offenses."

The atrocity must be abolished, and let the reparations begin.

Richard Steeb



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teaching tip #59

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## SPORTS

## FOOTBALL

## Wait 'Til Next Year

BY NICK SANTONI  
STAFF WRITER

The 2005 football season ended the same as the previous six had. Western Conference big fish College of the Canyons wrapped up their seventh consecutive title, while Valley swam among the bottom-feeders of the conference pool.

Canyons increased boasting rights with a 48-26 victory over Bakersfield on Nov. 26, picking up their 35th consecutive win in the process.

As for the Monarchs, their 2-8 overall record was better than only three of the 16 Western Conference teams. Their 2-5 division record managed to be their only saving grace as rival Pierce College had even more trouble, finishing the year winless.

One must remember the youth of this year's squad: 65 of the team's 79 players were freshman. The season proved to be a learning experience that Head Coach Jimmy Sims Jr. hopes to build on. "The players that will be returning will have that first year under their belts," said the first-year Valley coach. "Experience is a major asset to have on the field. We're confident that things will progress in the right direction."

Sims received criticisms for the team's performance. But the team finished the year on a positive note—winning two of their final three games. Their first two wins came against Santa Barbara and Pierce before they got trounced in the final game of the season against eventual champ, Canyons, 51-0.

The Monarchs averaged

only 17.2 points per game, while surrendering an average of 33.4 points. The team struggled to find its offensive identity all season long, failing to integrate the rush with a pass-oriented attack.

Consequently, Valley threw 22 interceptions on the year and gained a meager 454 yards on the ground for the season. In contrast, Valley allowed opponents to run all over them, giving up a staggering 1,632 yards rushing.

Amid a year of frustration and disappointment, three Valley players were recognized for their outstanding play. Sophomore defensive back Geoff Tisdale was a unanimous choice for the first All-Defensive team for the second straight year, and freshman John Fonua and Carlos Chang were named to the second teams.

Now that this young team is battle-tested, the team should fare well in the future. On the bright side, leading wide receivers Antoine Palmer and Lance Harper will be returning to next year's Monarch crew. The pair put up impressive numbers despite the difficult season. Palmer finished the year with six touchdowns on 42 catches for 629 yards. Harper added 49 receptions for 648 yards and one touchdown.

Running back Abel Herrera will also be back next year, and anticipates good things come next August. "It's time to lift and run hard," said Herrera, who finished the year with 395 yards on 114 carries for five touchdowns. "Next year should be different. Wait and see!"

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

## Lady Monarchs Learning the Hard Way

■ Young team still in search of confidence and rhythm as Valley's two quick losses lead to early exit from Moorpark Tournament.

BY NICK SANTONI  
STAFF WRITER

The Lady Monarchs display promise and talent, but stringing together a full 40 minutes remains a challenge for the young squad.

The Valley College women's basketball team continues to struggle in the preseason, eliminated in the second round of the Moorpark Tournament on Saturday.

Before the tournament got under way, the team desired to take on tougher competition. "[Mt. San Antonio] is a top team," said assistant coach Shelton Boykin. "We want to play teams that will make us better as a whole. We're not looking for any pushovers."

But in Friday's first-round game against top seed Mt. San Antonio, Valley received more than they had bargained for; demolished 75-31.

The Eagles played relentless defense, holding the Lady Monarchs to under 30 percent from the floor, using their speed to get easy baskets in the paint and from Valley turnovers.

Valley's second-round loss to Monterey Peninsula on Saturday 74-61 may have brought the Lady Monarchs' tournament hopes to a halt, but the game was far more com-

petitive. Valley ran out of gas in the game's waning moments, and with eight minutes left to play and down only four points, 57-53, Monterey tightened the screws and hit clutch shots.

Valley's defensive breakdown during this span dropped their preseason record to a lowly 1-10 overall.

"We just need to play better defense, and get back in transition," said Freshman-starter Ashley DeBose in reference to the team's collapse at the end of the second half. "We need to keep our poise no matter the situation and play as a team."

Although the preseason results have not been up to the coaching staff's expectations, the preseason schedule is composed of tougher teams that they won't have to face when the regular season starts on Jan. 4. Valley hopes the tougher preseason opposition will gear the team up for divisional play and the Lady Monarchs should only benefit in the future.

In the meantime, the Lady Monarchs are still learning to play together being that they have only been playing since November. However, Valley still shows flashes of their true potential. The team's main concern is sustaining effort and focus for a full 40-minute game while understanding each player's individual role within Head Coach Ruth Seja's system.

Once the players get more comfortable with one another, Valley could become a Western Conference threat. The Lady Monarchs appear to have all



DAN VILLASENOR / VALLEY STAR

**YOUNG AND RESTLESS** - Valley point guard Saida Johnson leads an inexperienced team in another hard-fought loss. The 1-10 Lady Monarchs are battered but unbowed: "We have what it takes to be a winning team," said asst. coach Shelton Boykin.

the tools necessary to become formidable — a strong starting five and a bench capable of contributing solid minutes.

Starting point guard Saida Johnson utilizes her quickness in slashing her way to the hoop and facilitates the offense. She is also a tenacious defender with good ball-handling skills; hustling after loose balls and around screens. Sophomore center Andrijana Kertez is a strong presence in the post, and her 6-foot-2 frame gives Valley strength near the basket for high-percentage shots and good

rebounding opportunities.

Plus, sophomore guard Ani Mecca is a big scoring threat—she can be deadly from beyond the three-point arc, can drain the 15-foot jump shot and enjoys powering her way into the post. Valley has a team that could surprise many.

"We need to make better decisions on defense," said Boykin after the early Moorpark exit. "But we have what it takes to be a winning team."

Valley's next game will be at L.A. City College on Saturday, Dec. 17, at 5:30 p.m.

## VALLEY LIFE

## DVD REVIEW

## "Cinderella" Story on DVD

BY HOLLY DARE  
COPY EDITOR

"Cinderella Man," back in theaters and new on DVD this week, is worthy in any format. It is one of those rare, moving, true stories — if submitted in a non-fiction writing class, it would get an A for being unbelievable. The film is certainly worthy of the price of theater admission and the DVD has some really outstanding features.

"Cinderella Man" is the life story of '30s boxer James J. "Gentleman Jim" Braddock and his wife Mae, passionately portrayed by Oscar winners Russell Crowe and Renée Zellweger. Braddock had some success in the late 1920s, but after the stock market crash, the family — the couple had three children — fell on difficult times. Braddock's bad luck followed him into the ring. He lost his boxing license and struggled to find work to feed the family and keep the heat on during those frigid New Jersey winters.

That's where the story took its Cinderella-like turn. In 1934, a last-minute cancellation on an undercard fight gave Braddock an unexpected chance. And to everyone's surprise, he won and kept on winning, eventually facing the much-feared Max Baer for the title.

The movie provides a look into the life of a man who publicly rose to greatness but was driven by far simpler motivations: the love of his wife and family and the need to keep them together and fed. Directed by Ron Howard ("A Beautiful Mind," "The Missing"), "Cinderella Man" truly gives the viewer a sense of the desperate times this country faced in the Great Depression.

The film is back in theaters, presumably to give Howard, Crowe, Zellweger and company a run at the Oscars. When the movie was first released earlier this year, Universal Studios took the unusual step of offering a money-back guarantee to viewers as a show of faith in the movie.



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL

**SOMETHING TO CROWE ABOUT** - Oscar winners Crowe and Zellweger in true-life boxing fable by director Ron Howard, new to DVD this month.

## "Cinderella Man"

Director: Ron Howard  
Features: Russell Crowe and Renée Zellweger

★★★★★ out of 5

The DVD is loaded with extras. There are three voiceover commentaries from Howard, and one by each of the writers. Howard's is the most relevant; it would have made sense to combine the two writers' tracks into one. The DVD also features a descriptive visual service (DVS) audio track for the blind.

On the flip side of the disc, there is a deleted scenes section — a must see. Often these scenes were left on the cutting room floor for a good reason. Not so with these. Each deleted scene gives even more insight into these characters as well as the actors' performances.

There are also several documentaries included. They cover casting, making the film, boxing history, and the real-life family of Braddock.

Boxing fans will enjoy the boxing history feature with Angelo Dundee, trainer of Muhammad Ali, who has a small role in the movie. Everyone will enjoy the interviews with the Braddock family. Their pride in the accomplishments of their father and grandfather as well as their love for the man comes shining through.

James Braddock was a rock-solid, good and decent man. "Cinderella Man" beautifully portrays his life and times.

## Say No to the Blockbuster

■ Non-mainstream DVDs are great stocking stuffers.

BY JESUS ESQUIVEL  
STAFF WRITER

Batman saves the day, Anakin finally becomes Vader and we all get taught an over-acted lesson in racism that's wrapped into a neat little package in Crash.

Those three DVDs ("Batman Begins," "Star Wars Episode III" and "Crash") are the top sellers this holiday season, yet there are more unpredictable DVDs that also came out this year that would make for more surprising gifts.

Bill Murray ("Lost in Translation") leads an all-star cast playing marine biologists and unpaid interns in the Criterion Collection double disc set of "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou."

The film is a perfect balance of sensitive sadness and witty humor all set to a score that resembles an 8-bit Nintendo soundtrack.

The set contains deleted scenes and commentary from director Wes Anderson and co-writer Noah Baumbach. It also has many video interviews with cast members and composer Mark Mothersbaugh. It contains a handful of featurettes and ten complete performances of David Bowie songs in Portuguese by Seu Jorge. The list price is \$33.

Re-released by Universal this year was the 1980 film "Where The Buffalo Roam," based on several writings by the late gonzo journalist Dr. Hunter S. Thompson. It also features Murray starring as Thompson and Peter Boyle ("Taxi Driver") as Carl Lazlo, Thompson's attorney.

Fans of the 1998 release of "Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas" should enjoy the tales of drugs, revolutionaries, anti-Nixonism and the 1972 Super



ILLUSTRATION BY JESUS ESQUIVEL

**SHATTERED KALEIDOSCOPE** - Marine biology, pornography and Fruit Loops make great gifts.

Bowl. The list price is \$13.

In a completely different realm "Mysterious Skin," directed by Gregg Araki and based on the novel by Scott Heim, manages to provide serene, yet gritty visuals in a movie laced with pedophilia and shocking sexual content. This movie isn't for the easily offended.

It tells a compelling story of two different teens. One is a male prostitute (Joseph Gordon-Levitt of TV's 3rd Rock from the Sun) and the other is obsessed with alien abductions (Brady Corbet, "Thirteen"). They cross paths and uncover a dark secret that haunts both their pasts.

The DVD features interviews with Araki, Corbet, Gordon-Levitt, and Heim. It includes a book reading, director's commentary and a Tribeca Film Festival featurette. The list price is \$25.

Also sharing the texture of gritty cinema is "Enduring Love" directed by Robert Michell. It features future blond Bond, Daniel Craig and Rhys Ifans ("Vanity Fair").

The two men witness a tragic accident they fail to prevent. Afterward, Ifans' character feels a deep connection with Craig. Following in the steps

of "Cape Fear" and "Swimfan," Ifans begins to stalk Craig's confrontational character and it all leads to a bloody climax. The list price is \$29.

This year also saw the DVD release of "Inside Deep Throat," an excellent documentary on the most profitable film in motion picture history. Written and directed by Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato, the film explores the controversy and popularity of the pornographic film "Deep Throat."

The documentary is narrated by Dennis Hopper and features interviews and archive footage from celebrities, actors and filmmakers on issues like the first amendment and the impact the popular film had on society.

The theatrical NC-17 edition contains more extras than the rated R version. Exclusive to the NC-17 edition are 5 featurettes; an expert discussion on the "art" of performing oral sex, a discussion on sex in modern society and two features dedicated to "Deep Throat" star Linda Lovelace. The list price for this DVD is \$27.98.

This holiday season, give something new; a history lesson in film, an adventure through pirate waters, or a chronicle of drugs and journalism.



'TRiO' *continued from page 1*

"The program always makes sure you are taking the right classes for your major and the university you want to transfer to," said health science major Marina Urquidez, who takes advantage of TRiO's one-on-one English and math tutoring.

Although TRiO will only accept 160 students in order to provide personalized services, only 80 people are currently enrolled in the program.

"I think everyone should apply to TRiO," said 19-year-old Maria Ayala, a student at Valley who was accepted into the program a month ago. "You have to be

crazy not to, everything's for our benefit. The program is amazing."

Students eligible for Pell grants with unmet needs or loan requirements may be able to receive additional grant funds.

For more information, interested students can contact Barbara Schneider, director of TRiO/SSS at (818) 947-2600 ext. 2483, email her at [schneib@lavc.edu](mailto:schneib@lavc.edu) or go to the cafeteria building room 101B. The application is also available on the program's website, accessible through the student services link on Valley's homepage, [www.lavc.edu](http://www.lavc.edu).

'Crash' *continued from page 1*

cameras that monitor sudden breaking and speed changes on the buses, while city engineers reduce traffic signs in hopes of lessening motorists' confusion.

Some buses are already equipped with strobe lights to draw attention, however Sean Skehan, a senior transportation engineer for the Los Angeles Department of Transportation said, "We really felt those lights were not that effective. They're being replaced with flashing bus-crossing signs."

The MTA has done so much to prevent accidents and it seems the new issue is inconvenience, but riders still get on because they have to.

"They should put padding in the bus, I'd feel safer that way," said anthropology major Aram Danakian. "It was easier before this, I used to just take the 156 now I have to walk 15 minutes to the Woodley stop, but it's the fastest way home for me."

## THE VALLEY STAR WANTS YOU

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For other explorations in journalism, take **Mass Communications (Journalism 105)**, which surveys different media with an emphasis on their sociological impact. *Journalism 105* (3 units) meets UC/CSU general education requirements, category D.

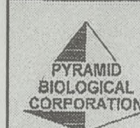
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Section: 0435

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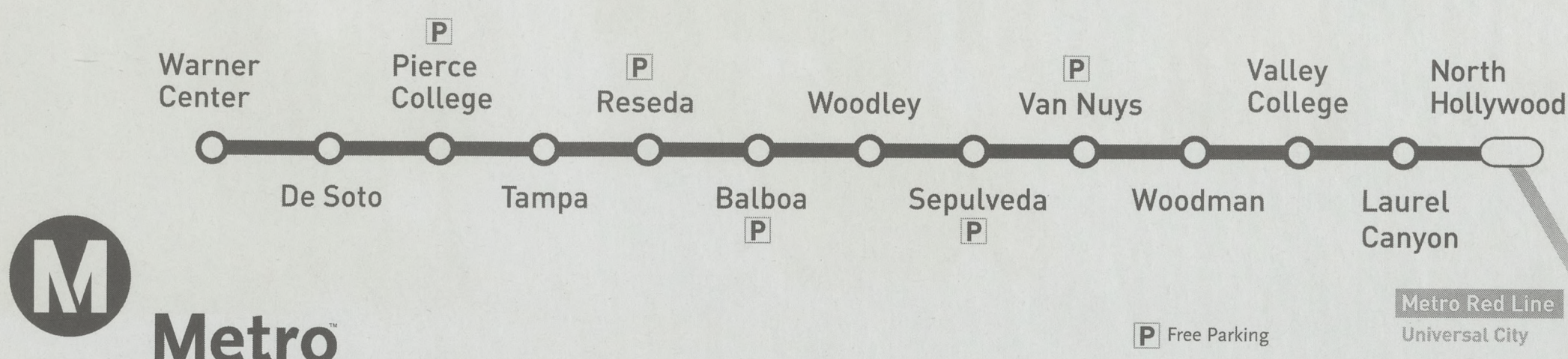
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# GALLERY



ARTAK AYVAZIAN / VALLEY STAR  
**THEY GROW UP SO FAST** - Mary Kaladzhyan ponders her future near Casitas Lake.



DAN VILLASENOR / VALLEY STAR  
**LIGHTS IN THE SKY** - Another beautiful sunset at the El Matador State Beach where beauty lives and tranquility resides.

TEXT AND LAYOUT BY DAN VILLASENOR  
AND MELANIE SALDANA.

*Best Of '05*



MARIA LOW / VALLEY STAR  
**SERENITY NOW** - These Chinese fishing boats take a rare rest on this calm day on Zhouzhuang, a region of rivers and lakes in China. Serenity sweeps over the area known as The Oriental Venice.



NINA BRUCKNER / VALLEY STAR  
**ON GUARD** - Valley College Water Polo captain Nestor Dordoni (right) tests his teammates' skills in the water as he attempts to get the ball past Beck Flanagan (left) and goalie Ed Tsvislavsky (center).

THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE HARD AT WORK MAKING PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE VALLEY STAR. FROM CAMPUS TO CHINA, HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT WERE NOT PUBLISHED THIS SEMESTER.



MELANIE SALDANA / VALLEY STAR  
**MAHALO** - Thanksgiving sunset at a cove off Kalia Highway in Honolulu, Hawaii.